FILE

PUBLIC GATHERING
Monday Evening
April 5, 1943
Mess Hall 26

The chairman of the evening was Mr. Dick Izuno, Block Manager #12. Entertainment was provided by the Manzanar Half-shots (a bass violin, a banjo, and a Spanish guitar) and a girl vocalist. Two baton-twirling girls also entertained.

Mr. Anzai, Chairman of the Block Managers' Council, gave a talk in Japanese. He spoke of the fine work done by Father Lavery of the Maryknoll Church. Then, he remarked about the evacuation and gave a few thoughts on the situation.

Mr. George Minamiki, speaking for the young Catholic men in this Center, praised the work of Father Lavery and gave thanks to him. Mr. Minâmiki declared that Father Lavery could well be called "Father of Manzanar."

Father Steinback of the Catholic Church here gave a few words of welcome to Father Lavery.

Mr. Izuno introduced Father Lavery who spoke first in Japanese. After saying a few words rather apologetically, Father Lavery spoke in English and continued the rest of the talk in English. He opened by giving words of hope and then compared this Center with others. He cited an instance where a man in Poston said that living in Poston could be likened to living in "ji-go-ku."

Father Lavery's talk consisted of five parts: 1. Internees; 2. Maryknoll Church; 3. Labor and Relocation; 4. Educational Program for Those to Relocate; 5. Future Hopes.

1. Internees. It was disclosed that the internees in Lordsberg, New Mexico and in Livingston, Louisiana are to be moved to Santa Fe, NewMexico. All dealings with internees will be transferred from the hands of the Army to the Department of Immigration. The Army will take charge only of prisoners of war. Father Lavery stated that the internees are happy. They receive good treatment, eat good food, and are in good health. For relaxation, the men play golf, baseball, and many indoor games. They have an hour's study of English each day.

Mr. Ennis, who is with the Department of Immigration, is reputed to be an exceptionally fine person always working for minority groups. Father Lavery disclosed (but not for publication) that Mr. Ennis declared that he would personally examine all cases of interned men. Mr. Ennis is said to have stated that many internees will be released. It was pointed out that a man could have a rehearing at anytime he so desires as new evidences come out.

At this point, Father Lavery pointed out that many internees do not want to be released because of the good treatment being received. An anecdote was told about a man who upon being released from an internment camp went to Rohwer, Arkansas to live with some of his relatives. He could not locate any of them, but he remained at that Center for a time. After two or three weeks, he went back to the internment camp from which he was released and asked to be interned there for the duration.

Father Lavery praised very highly the work which is being done to create what is known as a Family Camp. In this Camp, each family is to live apart from the others in a duplex-type of home. Everything will be as normal as possible. The home will be equipped with a kitchen, bath, etc. Families will cook their own meals. Because of lack of materials with which to build, couples may have to eat at mess halls instead of having kitchens where they might cook for themselves.

Those persons who are not likely to be released are former officers of Japanese Associations (because the Government cannot understand such organizations) and those who have applied for repatriation to Japan (although such applications may be withdrawn if so desired). No one will be sent back to Japan unless he desires such action. Also, many who requested that they be allowed to return to Japan may be stopped by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. According to a recent radio report, the exchange ship may not sail at all.

2. Maryknoll Church. Father Lavery gave a summarized report of the whereabouts and work of Fathers, Brothers, and Sisters in various other Centers.

3. Labor and Relocation. Mr. Dillon S. Myer, Director of the War Relocation Authority, asked Father Lavery to see labor leaders. The W.R.A. had sent people out to interview them, but perhaps as a Church man, the Father would be able to do more. In Washington D.C., Father Lavery met the top men of the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. Then, he visited other large cities including Indianapolis, Chicago, Buffalo, New York, Detroit, Cleveland, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Milwaukee. At each of the cities visited, the main topics for discussion were relevant to relocation and the possibilities for the Japanese to enter unions. It was found that labor leaders could not oppose the relocation plan because to do so would be contrary to their constitutions and beliefs. The unions were said to be willing to do anything provided that they "don't have to stick their necks out."

Father Lavery was advised that if he could get governmental statements regarding relocation, the union papers would be glad to spread such news around. When the Father replied that many statements have been made already, he was asked to arrange it so that Mr. Elmer Davis would give a declaration over the radio. Mr. Dillon S. Myer upon being asked to broach the matter replied that it would be no trouble at all.

It was stated that Senator Sheridan Downey of California was the only influential man on the West Coast to oppose the evacuation. The declaration was made that in California, high pressure minority groups (i.e. Associated Farmers, Grand Parlour of the Native Sons of the Golden West) gained control over official opinion. Then, attitudes in California swayed the rest of the nation. The simile was made of a dog's tail wagging the body. Now, the situation is changing. People are beginning to understand and know the facts. Matters have become such that now the dog will wag the tail--California will have to follow instead of leading.

Once more, it was reiterated that not one labor man opposed the relocation plan. It is all in accord with their principles of justice, their unions, and their constitutions.

4. Educational Program for Those to Relocate. Father Lavery spoke about scholarships and loans which are available to anyone who would like to make use of them. The loans would be such that they could be repaid on time payment bases with a very low rate of interest. It was stated that persons were getting cleared for colleges twenty-five times faster than before.

Opportunities for work are enormous practically everywhere. There are jobs of every kind and description. No better spirit is to be found in the country as a whole except perhaps in the South. In various sparsely populated districts, people may be antagonistic, but residents of Centers should not have any fears about going out. It was stressed that everyone is taking a fair attitude.

Mr. Louis Walters, Head of the Waiters and Cooks Union in Detroit, Michigan, said that he would guarantee jobs for all dishwashers, waiters, and cooks. Arrangements would be made whereby union dues would be paid on easy terms. The wages were quoted as follows:

Dishwashers--------------$25 per week plus meals
could go up to $32.50
Waiters------------------$35 per week plus meals
Cooks--------------------$50 per week plus meals
could go up to $65.

5. Future Hopes. It was pointed out by Father Lavery that during the last War, there was a German problem; however, after the War was over, hatred and everything else was forgotten. The general attitude for Americans is not to hold grudges. Since not one spy or saboteur was found among the Japanese, that record will be to the credit of all Japanese after the war is over. The people on the Outside are very much in sympathy with the Japanese and the co-operation shown by those who were put in "Concentration Camps" will be remembered later.

Father Lavery said, "Look for hope in the future." He then pointed out instances in which other people are suffering outside where families lose their sons in the war. He cited one case in which a Mrs. Sullivan lost five sons in the war. Many mothers are getting nervous breakdowns because of excessive worries. Father Lavery closed his talk by saying, "The future holds for you a very fine opportunity. Don't worry too much because 90% of what we worry about never happens."